

Newburyport
1793

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MR. SPRING'S

THANKSGIVING SERMON.



BRITISH

THANKSGIVING SERMON.

A
DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT THE

NORTH CHURCH IN NEWBURYPORT,

NOVEMBER 7th, 1793.

BEING THE DAY APPOINTED FOR A

GENERAL THANKSGIVING,

BY THE AUTHORITY OF

MASSACHUSETTS.

BY SAMUEL SPRING, A. M.

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NEWBURYPORT:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY JOHN MYCALL.

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A

THANKSGIVING DISCOURSE.

I CORINTHIANS, VII. 30.

—AND THEY THAT REJOICE, AS THOUGH THEY
REJOICED NOT.

THANKSGIVING-DAYS are the seasons of joy and gladness. They are appointed, to give us an opportunity to express our gratitude to the Great Benefactor of men, in a social, public manner. Lest, therefore, we rejoice, like sinners, with selfish affections, and provoke God to say: “I hate, I despise your feast-days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies;” it highly concerns us to improve the day, according to our solemn profession. To meet, therefore,

fore, and guide your grateful meditations and reflections upon this happy occasion, I shall enumerate some of the blessings for which we are now called to be thankful, and display the reasons for rejoicing, as though we rejoiced not : For in the language of the connexion : “ This I say, brethren, the time is short : it remains that both they that have wives, be as though they had none ; and they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not ; and they that use the world, as not abusing it ; for the fashion of this world passeth away.”

I. ACCORDING to the method adopted, we are to enumerate some of the blessings for which we are this day called to be thankful. But where shall we begin, or where shall we end ? For the field is both wide and long. Our mercies are as numberless as the sands, or the sun-beams. They are infinite, and cannot be told. To mention, therefore, some of the leading blessings of the year is all that can reasonably be expected, in a single.

gle branch of discourse. While enumerating the blessings of the year, you will permit me to mention some of the most common ones. For why shall we slide over some of the choicest blessings of heaven? Shall the most deep and useful streams of divine mercy be unnoticed and forgotten, because they flow without intermission? Is life less worthy of grateful notice, because we have enjoyed it so many years? Is the offer of the gospel depreciated, because it has been constantly made to us all our days? Who is so hardened as to assert that the obligation of man decreases in proportion to the increasing displays of Divine Mercy? Are men under no obligations to God at any time because he is unremittingly, and forever merciful and gracious? Let us, then, thankfully recognize the common mercies of God, because they are permanent: For, to the thankful heart, they are new every morning, and fresh every night.

BUT to return to the grateful task of enumerating the mercies of the year. God has mercifully
blessed

blest us with health. For though sickness hath, in a measure, prevailed in this and other places, in the course of the year; and though death, with hasty steps, hath in some instances followed it, as we shall have occasion to remark in the next branch of discourse; yet we and our families, and the United States have, generally, enjoyed a great share of health. In this respect God has not treated us according to our desert: For, instead of the least measure of health, we deserve sickness, pain, distress and death. We deserve all the evils which attend the various fevers, infections, maladies, and plagues, which, sometimes, have an uncontrouled commission to destroy the children of men. Though we have, in the course of the year, experienced more sickness than has been usual; yet how wide is the difference between what we enjoy, and what we deserve! For have we not been under advantages, as a people, to attend to the common and stated business of life? We sometimes are presented with accounts of places so grievously visited with

sickness

sickness and death, that shops are locked up; doors are shut; business ceases, and mourners go about the streets, or hide themselves in secret chambers or corners, to escape the stench of the most mortal contagion. We sometimes hear of whole cities being clothed in sackcloth, and covered with ashes. But have we experienced the like, during the year? Have our families, in the course of the year, been so distressed with sickness, that the sick and distressed have suffered, because health itself was sick and distressed? Have we been obliged to hide ourselves from sick and dying children, from sick and dying parents, and the dearest connexions, to escape the fatal darts, hurrying them out of the world? Have we been afraid to follow the remains of our friends to the grave? Have we, from our garret windows, looked down with painful eyes, with aching, bleeding hearts, and seen the nauseous remains of our departed friends, and bosom companions, thrown into the common cart, and hurried off to the shallow grave, but half prepared? No: we have not experienced this sharp-

edged adversity. We have only heard of it, by the hearing of the ear. And, notwithstanding all the just descriptions we have read, we are but mere strangers to the gloomy scene. Let us then be thankful for the health which we have enjoyed. Let us, this day, make a proper estimate of our health, and give God a tribute of undisssembled praise. For he has clothed us with salvation, while we, as well as others, deserve not only to be stripped of health, but to be thrown into the pit.

ANOTHER leading blessing which we enjoy, is, peace. Our western frontiers, it must be remembered, as a righteous scourge of Providence, are vexed with the natives of the wilderness. Like the destroying pestilence, they walk in darkness, and waste at noon-day. Like the nations contiguous with Canaan, they are snares and traps to our distant settlements. They are scourges in their sides, and thorns in their eyes : For they seem to be reserved by Providence to punish a wicked people, who, while crowding them off from their native soil, have not, in many instances, treated them

according

according to the common principles of justice and humanity. With these skulking archers of the woods, we are obliged to be at war. For, like the faithless Carthaginians, who long vexed the Romans, they will break the most solemn covenants, dig up the hatchet, and murder their neighbours. But, except this contest with the sword of the wilderness, the several States enjoy the flowing advantages of peace. You well remember the calamities of war which preceded, and led on the memorable revolution in America. They were heavy. In the cruel contest with Britain, the blood of our fathers, brothers, and children, was spilt, and enriched the land which we now possess. You can never forget the dark and angry cloud, which, for several years, hung over the land. The wormwood and the gall, are still retained. The hoarse echo of clashing arms, and thundering cannon, is still heard. But *now* we have peace. The blessing is great. It is inestimable. Cast an eye of pity over the extensive territory of Europe. What is the present state of
France?

France? The neighbouring nations are combined to pluck from her the standard of liberty. The horrid consequence, to name, is this, Europe is drenched with blood. It is the potter's field. Could we ascertain it, we should stand astonished at the vast numbers of men this war has swept away since the last Thanksgiving: and it does not appear from the most authentic information, that the greedy, thirsty land of Europe is yet satisfied with the blood of man. We have reason to fear, that rivers of blood will yet flow deep, and wide, before the sword will be cleansed, and returned to its scabbard. O! the blood of thousands and thousands is now calling for vengeance to light upon tyrannic, guilty heads. And, since it is probable that the cry will be more and more loud and dreadful, shall not we thankfully receive the flowing blessings of peace which we enjoy? Shall we never estimate the balmy blessing of peace till it be snatched from us? Must we be taught the value of peace by its loss? The blessing of peace, like a tree of many branches, has numerous

blessings

blessings connected with it. Peace has a thousand blessings in her arms and ten thousand in her friendly bosom. Like a generous cloud, or the morning sun, she profusely sheds her inestimable favours on every object, and therefore calls for our unfeigned gratitude.

ANOTHER blessing, not the least worthy of grateful notice, is that flowing plenty of the bounties of providence which crowns the year. For though in this vicinity we were subjected to an early drought, which withered the grass of the field, yet by the kind influences of heaven, both the grain and corn have flourished. The former and latter harvests both have been crowned with plenty. The deficiency of grass is supplied in the fulness of corn and grain. There is a fulness of bread, and a sufficiency of wool and flax for clothing. Both the rich and the poor are supplied; and we are furnished with all the articles of exportation, necessary to heighten the advantages of commerce. The mariner, and mechanic, the husbandman, and merchant, and all ranks

ranks of men enjoy the smiles of heaven. There never was, perhaps, less necessity for poverty. If men are industrious and frugal, their necessities are amply supplied. God has loaded us with his benefits. If we were suffering in consequence of being destitute of necessary clothing, and a comfortable supply of bread, like many of our fellow men, we should look with astonishment at the bounty of Providence, like that which now demands our gratitude. But can we even now overlook the blessings strewed around us so plentifully? And except the heart of stone, who can be unthankful? For we are clothed with opulence, and blessed with plenty.

ANOTHER blessing, which urges the duty of gratitude upon us, is the equal and uniform operation of the federal government. God has not only granted us the best constitution of government in the world, but he has filled the offices of government with men of influence and reputation. The President, and Vice President are men of renown: and who has a right to impeach the Sena-

tors

tors and Representatives of the nation? Both at home, and abroad, our government is respectable, and influential. The cords of government are strong. We are not able to make a just estimation of the blessing which we enjoy in the federal government. Instead of having babes to rule over us, we have men of wisdom, and authority, who are not only able to meet the ambassadors of other nations upon the heights of sound policy, but to reprove their ignorance and arrogance, to correct their mistakes, and when necessary, to expose their base and pernicious designs. Our government is like a most complicated and useful machine, of which every wheel and spring uniformly performs its office; for good order and industry, the prosperity of individuals, and the prosperity of the nation, are the obvious consequences. We sit under the tall and fruitful tree of national prosperity and glory, and the banner over us, is love. Can we, therefore, observe a day of public Thanksgiving, and not extol the matchless goodness of the King of nations, for indulging us with this

ineestimable

ineestimable blessing? Let us give God the glory: For he ruleth over all, and makes rulers a blessing, or a curse to people, according to his sovereign pleasure.

BUT the blessing of all blessings, which must not escape the gratitude of the day, is the gospel of God's grace, which, notwithstanding all our wickedness, we still enjoy. Why has not God taken the gospel from us, and given it to the Gentiles of the wilderness? Why, since we have been so ungrateful, has he not taken away our gospel-privileges, and given them to the Savages? Is it because we are better than they? No, in no wise: for we can easily prove that we are more vile than the bloody natives of the land. For what could God consistently have done more that he has not done? But alas! What is the fruit? Have we not ever since the revolution, while clothed with prosperity, been chargeable with black ingratitude? Have we not trodden upon the gracious offer of the gospel, and in many instances become very profligate and abandoned? Can it be denied?

But

But though we increase and protract our wickedness, yet God continues to be gracious. For we have the free and uninterrupted use of the Bible, and all the advantages of his house, and ordinances. He gives us line upon line, and precept upon precept. The grace of God is unwilling to leave us. Though we deserve to be cast off, like the Jews, God yet says: "Come, let us reason together; for though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them as wool; though they be red like crimson, I will make them as white as snow." Thus the God of all grace still treats us: and shall we not be thankful? Shall we this day refuse him the small tribute of praise? What is worthy of thanks, if the free use of the Bible is not? What, if the ordinances of the gospel are not? What is worthy of gratitude, if we are not under the greatest obligations for the constant offer of God's grace, and the plentiful infusion of his spirit on some parts of the land, and the salvation of many souls, ready to perish. These are some of the leading blessings for which we are this day call-

ed to be thankful. The enumeration, I am sensible, is deficient : and it must be left in a deficient state. For the subject is so very copious, that I neither know where to begin, nor where to end. I shall, therefore, leave it to enlightened heads, and devout hearts. For according to the method adopted, we must,

II. **DISPLAY** the reasons why we are required to rejoice, as though we rejoiced not. And,

I. **IT** is proper to rejoice in a joyless manner, because all gospel-joy is the fruit of godly sorrow. As every stream flows from the fountain, and cannot flow any longer than it is supplied by it, so gospel-joy invariably flows from gospel-sorrow, on account of sin. I shall attempt to make this truth obvious, because it is the most interesting, and especially on the present occasion : Christians this day rejoice in the view of the boundless mercy of God, exercised toward them in the course of the year. But, in what channel does the mercy of God flow ? In the channel of redeeming love ? This at once presents the sufferings and death of
Christ,

Christ, who substituted himself for sinners. For when Christians rejoice for being cleansed, they cannot but remember that they are cleansed in the atoning blood of Christ. They rejoice in being clothed with the garments of salvation, but they cannot forget that their white robes are the purchase of the blood of God. They rejoice in being constantly loaded with the divine benefits ; but they know, that if Christ had not borne the curse in his own body upon the tree, that instead of these numerous mercies of God, they must now feel the intolerable vengeance of God, in the flames of hell. While, therefore, at the time of joy and gladness, we look down into the regions of despair, and see what we must inevitably suffer now and forever, except saved by the blood of atonement, is it possible to rejoice without mourning at the same time ? For what is that joy, but carnal and unholy, which is not the fruit of godly sorrow ? The joy of Christians terminates upon the glory of God, which is displayed in the salvation of sinners, but as they cannot rejoice at the expense of

Christ's blood, their joy necessarily flows from unreferred submission to the righteous penalty of the divine law: they, therefore, rejoice, as though they rejoiced not. Even the most sparkling cup of joy which Christians drink, is mingled with the deepest sorrow, that they have spilt the blood of Christ. Can Christians rejoice without trembling, in the view of this great truth? Let Christians who have experienced the best joys of religion, judge whether we are not treating of the plainest fact. I ask all the joyful friends of God, whether their acceptable joy does not keep pace with their godly sorrow? Does not this doctrine correspond with your best experience? Do you, can you reap Christian consolation from the joy which is not the obvious fruit of godly mourning? Have you reaped more joyful fruit than you have sown godly tears? If so, why does the Bible teach us: that "those who sow in tears, shall reap in joy?" And why does it instruct us: that "he who goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless return, bringing his sheaves with him?" And

why does Christ connect consolation with sorrow, by saying: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted?" It is as plain, that joy is the fruit of sorrow, as that pardon, according to the divine constitution, is the fruit of repentance, or that honour is the fruit of humility. Rejoice, then, my friends, with godly fear and trembling. While mourning in the view of sin, rejoice in the view of God's pardoning grace. For as Christian joy is the fruit of pardon, and pardon is the fruit of godly sorrow, It is impossible for Christians to be the subjects of more gospel-joy, than they are the subjects of godly sorrow. God measures our joy in the same golden cup in which he measures our tears: and except the divine constitution change, our Christian joy will be in proportion to our godly tears. But,

2. It is proper to rejoice, as though we rejoiced not, because God in the common cup of human life, wisely mingles and administers both mercies and judgments. We all drink of this mixed cup of mercies and afflictions. And though we
experience

experience a thousand, or a million mercies to one judgment, yet we are bound to notice and improve the judgments of God, as well as his mercies. For as long as we remain candidates for immortal glory, even the heavy judgments of God are merciful, because they are sent to impel us to repent, and fly to him for salvation. Accordingly, says David, "In faithfulness, O God, thou hast afflicted me. Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I learned to keep thy word. It is good for me, that I have been afflicted." For several months past, we have been reading in our current papers, of the heavy judgments of God, in the destroying plague, which has made such desolation at Philadelphia. Thousands have been suddenly swept off from the stage of human life, into eternity, and that once most flourishing capital left in the most gloomy and desolate state. The distress of that city, for several months past, has called upon the hearts of rocks to melt, and pour forth rivers of condoling tears. The judgment is too great to be described. And can we rejoice to-day, without

out

out some reference, by a channel of sorrow, to that awful, desolating judgment ? Can we present our tribute of thanks to God, that the infection has not pervaded the country, and not drop a tear of sorrow, that such dreadful judgments are necessary to correct the children of men ? Can we thank God that we have escaped this fore calamity, and not remember with penitent, bleeding hearts, that we as really deserve it as the citizens of Philadelphia ? Is it possible, I ask, to proceed with gospel-steps this day, and not transfer ourselves in solemn thought to that afflicted, mournful city, and weep, and condole with poor widows and orphans, and even with the desolate mansions that have buried all their inhabitants ?* If we should refuse to weep this day while we rejoice, would not the stones in the streets cry out ? Rejoice, then, as though you rejoiced not. Rejoice and mourn alternately.

Mingle

* We have the most affecting evidence of the great distress of the city, during the rage of the infection, from the list of the names of the 100 Orphans, who have fallen into the hands of the Orphan Committee. This list has been seasonably published by that Humane Committee, that the scattered relations of these helpless Orphans might be under proper advantages to make their respective claims in a satisfactory manner.

Mingle your cup both with joy and sorrow, gladness and sadness, answerably to the judgments and mercies of God.*

BUT

*Philadelphia, Nov. 26, 1793.

Dear Sir,

It would require a volume to comply with your request in the extensive manner in which you have made it. I have only time to inform you, that the distress of our city was unparalleled in the history of this country. For nearly six weeks, our streets were as quiet, and as deserted as the streets of Boston on a Sunday. Few persons were to be seen in them, except physicians, bleeders, and conductors of solitary hearses, or persons who were in pursuit of some one of them. Not a smile was to be seen in any countenance. Distress from actual suffering, or from sympathy, pervaded every family. The sick were illy attended, owing to one, and in some instances to all the following causes; viz. the desertion of their friends; the ignorance of their nurses; and the sickness, or multiplicity of business, of all our physicians. The hour of death was rendered more gloomy than in common times, by the difficulty, or impossibility of procuring ministers of the gospel to attend the sick in their last moments; for although most of our clergymen remained in the city, and complied with as many calls to the sick and dying as was in their power, yet from the great number of both, and from the death of some, and the sickness of others of that worthy body of men, many hundreds died without receiving from them the consolations of religion, or the rites of their respective churches. The deaths amounted to about 4000, in three months; a majority of whom were in the prime, or middle of life; and many of them, persons of the most useful characters. The poor were great sufferers by the calamity, for, added to pain, and grief, they sunk frequently (in the beginning of the disorder) under the want of the necessaries of life.

The disease was in some cases attended with but little pain, but in general, the sick complained of pains more exquisite than in any fever to which the human body is subject; except, perhaps, the plague.

From, dear Sir, your friend,
and most obedient Servant.

Reverend Samuel Spring.

Benjamin Rush.

BUT to withdraw your eyes from that weeping, afflicted city where God hath done his work, his strange work, where he hath brought to pass his act, his strange act,* let us for a moment, at least, attend to the judgments of God within our own domestic circle. "Is there evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it? Shall the trumpet be blown in the city, and the people be not afraid?" Has not God permitted, yea, commissioned that dangerous infection to break out among us? Friendly measures are adopted by the town, both to prevent, and check the natural virulence of the infection;

* In Philadelphia, during the time of the fever, there have been very many instances, in which, as soon as a person was seized with the fever, he was immediately abandoned by friends and the nearest relations, and resigned to the care of, perhaps, a single negro. This has been the case with persons of great affluence. And there are not wanting cases of persons so totally deserted, as to be without a human being to hand them a drink of water. Parents have deserted their children—children their parents—Husbands their wives—and wives their husbands. It is, probably, not exaggeration, to suppose that a fourth, or a fifth of the whole of the persons who have died, have been sacrificed through the consternation of those who ought to have taken care of them. Since the early terrors have been dispelled, these desertions have become rare.

Carey's Account of the Fever.

infection ; but the termination of the calamity is behind the curtain. For we have many aged and infirm persons among us, as well as babes, to whom the infection is the most unfriendly, whether they take it the natural way, or by inoculation. Are not two thirds of the inhabitants of the place exposed to the infection ? And is not this a judgment ? Do we not, in many respects, feel the judgment already ? And shall we not for months, and years to come ? While we, therefore, ascend the heights of joy, in consequence of the numerous mercies of the year, let us rejoice with fear and trembling. But has not God commissioned other judgments to visit us ? Have not several fevers prevailed, and proved mortal ? Hark ! Do we not even now hear the echo of the tolling, passing bell ? You well remember the mournful weeks, when deaths and funerals were frequent, and when the greedy grave presented a wide and unsatisfied mouth. Since the 1st of September, 36 persons have been taken from the Presbyterian Society ; 23 from the first Congregational Society ; 10
from

from the second; 5 from the church of England; and 3 from the Independent Society. In less than two months, 77 persons have been called from the living to the dead. And in the view of this mortality, shall we rejoice, and not mourn? Do not the many afflicted families among us, expect that we this day mingle with them the tears of sorrow? They now see the seats of their departed friends vacant. The last Thanksgiving they were with us; but now they are gone, no more to return. Let us, then, now mourn with those who mourn, and weep with those who weep, and rejoice as though we rejoiced not. For we cannot possibly forget the judgments of God, while we celebrate his mercies. God evidently mingles prosperity and adversity, mercies and afflictions, in the same cup of life, with a design to teach us to rejoice, as though we rejoiced not. But,

3. THAT it is the duty of man to rejoice in a joyless manner, it is evident from the fleeting, uncertain nature of all temporal enjoyments with which we are indulged. This sentiment lies obviously

viously upon the face of the text and connexion.

“ But this I say, brethren, the time is short. It remains that they that have wives, be as though they had none ; and they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not ; and they that use the world, as not abusing it ; for the fashion of this world passeth away.” All the enjoyments of life have this indelible inscription, “ *Short and Uncertain.*” We must rejoice as though we rejoiced not. For riches are but shining dust ; honour is but sounding breath, or a painted feather ; blooming health is but a fading flower ; parents are like dying trees, and children like brittle plants, with a deadly worm at the root : and life itself is but a moment, a span, a breath, a dream, and vanity. But, Oh ! death is a reality ! For it will soon draw aside the curtain, and present eternal bliss, or eternal pain. Short is the distance, very short is the interval between the cradle and the grave. The lamp of human life displays but a dying blaze. Let us, then, rejoice,

rejoice, as though we rejoiced not. For, "Who knows what a day, or an hour will bring forth? The living, O God, praise thee. For in death, there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave, who shall give thee thanks?"

I M P R O V E M E N T.

I. WE infer, that the exercises of Thanksgiving are some of the most solemn, and sublime exercises of Christianity. For as it is the mere sovereign mercy of God, which both prevents our falling into the pit of destruction, and furnishes us with the numerous blessings which we enjoy, so at the close of the day, and more especially of the year, to recognize these blessings in an acceptable manner, requires the most devout hearts. It is an employment, which requires the vigour of Christian affection. For the profession is to recognize the mercies of God, and to present an answerable offering of gratitude. When Christians, therefore, begin to enumerate the innumerable mercies

of God, their hearts melt within them, and they gratefully exclaim: "What shall we render to the Lord for all his benefits? For instead of the full cup of salvation, we deserve nothing but the dregs of the cup of God's wrath and indignation forever and ever. Christians, therefore, instead of indulging these vain and idle exercises which are opposed to the design of Thanksgiving-days, will be the subjects of the most solemn and elevated devotion. They will both mourn, and rejoice. While they view their sins and the death of Christ, they will mourn, and will rejoice with trembling, while contemplating the benefits of his death. In the same act of devotion they will both feel and display the solemnity of death and the gladness of the resurrection. For they rejoice, as though they rejoiced not.

2. WE infer, that Thanksgiving-days are never acceptably observed by sinners. As wisdom is too high for a fool, so the solemn and devout exercises of Thanksgiving are too elevated for graceless hearts. Sinners are equally strangers both to
godly

godly sorrow and Christian joy. For they are under the sole dominion of self-gratification. They are lovers of their own selves; lovers of pleasure, rather than lovers of God: Like the empty vine, they bring forth fruit only to themselves. Therefore God says: "I hate, I despise your feast-days, and will not smell in your solemn assemblies." As sinners are dead in trespasses and sins, they neither partake of the devotion, nor the consolation of the day.

3. WE infer the exceeding wretchedness of all those, who do not this day, present an offering of holy gratitude. For what can be more reasonable? Are we not all, of every description, under the greatest obligations to thank and praise the Lord? Has not God saved us from the furnace of his wrath, which we deserve for our sins? Has he not given us the offer of salvation? Have you not been indulged with all the means and advantages of the gospel? How frequently have you had opportunity to wait upon God in his house, both in season, and out of season? Has not God richly
blessed

blest you with health, peace, and plenty? You have not only been protected from numerous evils, to which you have been exposed, but clothed with prosperity. You can no more enumerate the blessings of the year, than you can count the dewy drops of the morning, or the rays of light emitted from the sun. Here you stand loaded with the divine benefits, and consequently, under the greatest obligations to be thankful. How sinful, then, how inexpressibly sinful, not to present your tribute of thanks? Is it possible for God to require less than your undissembled gratitude? Are you not under the best advantages to be thankful? Shall, then, the dull ox, and the stupid ass gratefully notice the kindness of their owners, and shall man, shall candidates for immortal glory treat their gracious Benefactor with ingratitude? Who can describe, or even conceive the wickedness with which ungrateful men are charged? For it is like infinity added to infinity. Remember, then, O sinners, that if you cannot be induced by millions of mercies, to be thankful, that you must expect soon

to meet God in his wrath and indignation. For he who made you will be glorified, because he made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil. If you will not glorify God in your salvation, he will glorify himself in your destruction. Prepare, then, O sinners, to meet your offended Maker. For "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause the darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness." Hear the voice of God to all ungrateful men this day: "If ye will not hear, and will not lay it to heart, to give glory to my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings, yea, I have cursed them already, because you do not lay it to heart."

4. LET us, now, at the close of the services of the day, carefully and impartially examine whether our hearts correspond with our profession. For, whether prepared, or not, we must all shortly

stand before the impartial tribunal of God. In the view, therefore, of the Judgment-Seat of Christ, which is but a step before us, where every thought and exercise will be displayed, it is natural to put the following questions. Are we penitent and thankful? Do we both mourn, and rejoice like Christians? Do we cordially mourn, while contemplating our own personal characters, as sinners? And do we rejoice with singleness of heart, while contemplating the special grace of God, revealed to our souls in and through Jesus Christ? For if according to the spirit of the text, we rejoice, as though we rejoiced not, we are the subjects of that contrition which always precedes holy gratitude. While, then, we professedly rejoice, let this be the serious and interesting question, which demands an impartial answer: Are we the subjects of that gratitude, which is the gospel-fruit of godly sorrow? What testimony presents from the morning exercises of the family and closet? Have we, in both secret and family devotion, realized the solemn and grateful design of the day?

day? Have we come up to the sanctuary to pay our vows with hearts in covenant with God? If our hearts are now gratefully devout, are we not possessed of comfortable evidence of our devotion? Let me, then, ask whether you have that happy and blessed testimony of your Thanksgiving, which will meet the approbation of the *Great Day*? What do we more than others, who professedly observe the solemnities of the day, but in the sight of God, who pervadeth the heart, are destitute of every devout exercise? Can we, now, in the presence of God, lay our hands upon our breasts and say that by his special grace we have improved the day, and are prepared to meet the joyful, thankful Choir at the Great Tribunal? What is the voice of enlightened conscience? For if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts and knoweth all things. But, if upon impartial examination, we find our hearts consonant with the high demands of the day, let us give God the glory. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory forever."

5. LET me close with a word of exhortation. And as we leave the house, let us remember with answerable exercises of heart, that it is highly probable, if not certain, that some of us will never see another Thanksgiving. Whose golden sands will be spent first, God alone knows: for in him we live, and move, and have our being, and in him are all our ways. Not knowing, then, the event of to-morrow, let us realize the shortness and uncertainty of life, and the certainty of death. Let us not go to our tables, which are richly furnished with the bounties of heaven, like those who eat and drink to themselves: but let us eat and drink to the glory of God, and give God thanks. When we sit as families around our Thanksgiving tables, let us all remember that the time is short; and that we shall soon be numbered in the cold grave, with our departed friends, who lately graced our Thanksgiving-Boards.

LET us, then, be ready for our great and last change. For we know not the day of our death.

As though it were my last request, let me desire my youthful hearers, to spend the evening with a wise reference to eternity. For those who thankfully improve the day, will humbly, and thankfully improve the evening. Turn a deaf ear, my young friends, to the persuasions of those, who intend to spend the evening in mirth and dissipation; for they have no communion with God, and are destroying their souls: but go devoutly to your closets, and enjoy the presence of God. As it is not probable, that you will all, though in the bloom of youth, see another Thanksgiving, spend a few moments this evening, conversing with death, and in praying for grace to triumph over the grave. For the time of young persons, as well as the time of the aged, is short. Remember, then, O young man, thy Creator, now in the days of thy youth, lest God in his wrath shall speedily say: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and

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in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment."

You will permit me, my young hearers, to address you in the plainest manner. For the most precious moments of the short glass of life are now sliding from you with speed. Like other young persons, you claim the privilege of enjoying the vain amusements, and diversions of youth; and are, perhaps, prone to think that your minister and parents, who have gathered the flowers, and enjoyed the sweets of youth, are more strict and rigid, than wise and judicious. But though we cannot ask you to copy, without reserve, the example which we set in the time of youth; and though our method of treating our children and young persons is far from being perfect, yet we can safely urge you to copy the example of Christ, and to remember your Creator in the days of your youth. For the time of youth, according to the course of providence, is the seed-time for an endless harvest. As you now

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sow the seed, so you will reap. If you will, after the public solemnities of the day, spend the evening in the vain and unhallowed amusements of youth, you must expect the displeasure and wrath of God. For God does not graciously grant you life, to be spent in self-gratification. Solemnly resolve, therefore, before you leave your seats, that you will, by the grace of God, spend the evening consonant with the solemn and grateful design of the day. Raise your hearts, like the thankful children of God, above the world and the things of the world. Anticipate the enjoyment of the grateful inhabitants of heaven. Let every one say with the thankful Psalmist: "What shall I render to the Lord, for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people."

Now unto him who is able to sanctify your hearts, and make you thankful, "And to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before
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the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy, to
 the only wise God and Saviour, be glory and
 majesty, dominion and power, both now and
 ever."

AMEN.

24 JUL 68

